



Broward County

Legislation Text

File #: 24-273, Version: 1

Broward County Commission Regular Meeting

Director's Name: Leonard Vialpando

Department: Resilient Environment

Division: Natural Resources Division

Information

Requested Action

MOTION TO ADOPT Resolution, the title of which is as follows:

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR SECTION 2 OF SB 1386/HB 1557, AS INTRODUCED, WHICH ADDS THE KRISTIN JACOBS CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION AREA TO THE LIST OF FLORIDA AQUATIC PRESERVE AREAS; URGING THE LEGISLATURE AND GOVERNOR TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE THEIR SUPPORT FOR CORAL REEF RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT BY SUPPORTING LONG-TERM RECURRING REVENUE SOURCES FOR CORAL REEF DISEASE RESPONSE AND RESTORATION, INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ASSISTED REPRODUCTION AND PROPAGATION OF CORALS FOR FUTURE RESTORATION EFFORTS, AND RESEARCH FOCUSED ON PATHOGEN IDENTIFICATION AND DISEASE RESPONSE STRATEGIES; URGING THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION COLLABORATE TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LONG-TERM REEF CONSERVATION STRATEGY; REQUESTING THAT RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES ENGAGE LOCAL PARTNERS ON COASTAL PROJECTS TO ENSURE THESE EFFORTS ARE REASONABLY ACCOMMODATED AS PART OF COASTAL CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT EFFORTS; DIRECTING THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO TRANSMIT A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION TO THE GOVERNOR, FLORIDA LEGISLATURE, SECRETARY OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND REGIONAL CORAL REEF STAKEHOLDERS; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Why Action is Necessary

Formal Board approval is necessary for the adoption of a Resolution.

What Action Accomplishes

Enables the adoption of the Resolution.

Goal Related Icon(s)

- ☒ County Commission
- ☐ Go Green
- ☐ MAP Broward

Previous Action Taken

The Broward County Commission previously approved of Resolution 2012-430 to form the Coastal

Ocean Task Force (“COTF”), and Resolution 2016-525 to endorse the final report from the COTF.

Summary Explanation/Background

THE RESILIENT ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT, THE NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION, AND THE BROWARD COUNTY CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE SUPPORT THE ABOVE MOTION.

This item supports the Board’s goal of Resilient Community, “ensuring accessible, seamlessly integrated investments in renewable energy, sustainable practices, manufacturing, resilient infrastructure and environmental protection.”

Support for this item formalizes and transmits Broward County’s request to the Governor, the Florida Legislature, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the regional coral reef stakeholders to support the designation of the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area, as described in Section 2 of SB 1386/HB 1557, as a Florida Aquatic Preserve area, under Section 258.39, Florida Statutes, and to support a long-term, recurring revenue source to provide adequate and flexible funding for dedicated staff resources for coral reef disease response and restoration efforts, infrastructure and capacity needed for assisted reproduction and propagation of corals and coral reef-associated species for future ecosystem restoration efforts, and in-water and land-based priority research focused on pathogen identification and disease response strategies.

Support for this item also formalizes and transmits Broward County’s request to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop and promptly implement a long-term coral reef conservation strategy for the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area before adverse impacts to the reef cannot be reversed and requests that responsible agencies actively engage local partners on coastal projects deemed to be in the public interest to ensure these efforts are reasonably accommodated as part of coastal conservation and management efforts.

Florida’s Coral Reef runs parallel to the coastline from the Dry Tortugas north to Martin County and is a unique and valuable national resource that protects our shorelines, beaches, and upland resources by reducing wave energy from storms and hurricanes, thereby providing flood protection values of over \$675 million per year and more than \$1 billion during extreme weather events. It is also recognized as the region’s first line of defense to the impacts of rising seas and storm surge, at a time when environmental conditions continue to threaten the adaptive capacity of the reef to rising seas, temperatures, disease, and ocean acidification. It provides essential marine habitat to over 6,000 species of marine life, including several threatened and endangered species, and is designated as a critical habitat for Staghorn (*Acropora cervicornis*) and Elkhorn (*Acropora palmata*) corals listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Coastal ocean waters are under great user pressure and suffer from water quality degradation that has compromised the resiliency of Florida’s Coral Reef and its habitat. Protection of Florida’s Coral Reef is essential for ensuring the continued protection of our shorelines, coastal food sources, cultural practices, biomedical opportunities, and coastal economies that are direct results of our coral reefs.

In 2018, after years of determined efforts of State Representative Kristin Jacobs and regional stakeholders, including the joint South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, the

Legislature acted to establish the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Conservation Area which encompasses sovereign submerged lands and state waters offshore of Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, and Martin Counties.

In 2021, the Legislature and Governor honored the late Representative Kristin Jacobs by commemorating her many contributions on behalf of the environment and coral reefs by renaming the conservation area the Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area (KJECA). The KJECA covers 105 miles of the northern portion of Florida's Coral Reef from the northern boundary of Biscayne National Park north to Port St. Lucie Inlet.

The Florida Legislature is currently considering SB 1386/HB 1557, Section 2 of which amends Section 258.39, Florida Statutes, to create Subsection (33) which includes the KJECA in the list of Florida Aquatic Preserves.

On February 1, 2024, the Broward County Climate Change Task Force passed a motion urging that the Broward County Board of County Commissioners support the inclusion of the KJECA in the list of Florida Aquatic Preserves.

This item supports various climate-related strategies detailed in the County's Climate Action Plan.

Source of Additional Information

Monica Pognon, Director, Natural Resources Division, (954) 519-1476.

Fiscal Impact

Fiscal Impact/Cost Summary

None.